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ABSTRACT

Being a witness in a court of law is not a common experience for most adults, let alone for children. And though both adults and children are likely to become nervous in a courtroom, their concerns can be vastly different. An adult may worry whether or not the child can describe things clearly, while the child may wonder whether or not he or she will have to go to the bathroom while testifying. This activity and coloring book for children describes what happens in a courtroom by using simple pictures and easy to understand descriptions. The book pictures what the courtroom may look like, offers descriptions of some of the people the child is likely to encounter in court, and gives some brief explanations of the different roles people have in the courtroom. Six rules for witnesses are provided, along with ways that adults can help the child through this experience. Also included are several activities for the child, such as a crossword puzzle, a word search, connect the dots, and a match game. (RJM)

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ED 398 512

GOING TO COURT

An Activity Book for Children

CG027304

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This book belongs to _____.

You're going to court because something happened that you know about and have to tell. Your job in court is to answer questions. Some questions will be about you, like your name and how old you are. Another question may be about the difference between the truth and a lie. Your job is to tell the truth when you answer questions about what you saw or heard or felt. A person who answers questions in court is called a **Witness.**

When you have told your story and answered all the questions - your job for the day is over.

A **Courtroom** is a special room where witnesses go to tell what they know. Some courtrooms look like this.

Now let's talk about who is going with you to court. Let's name them.

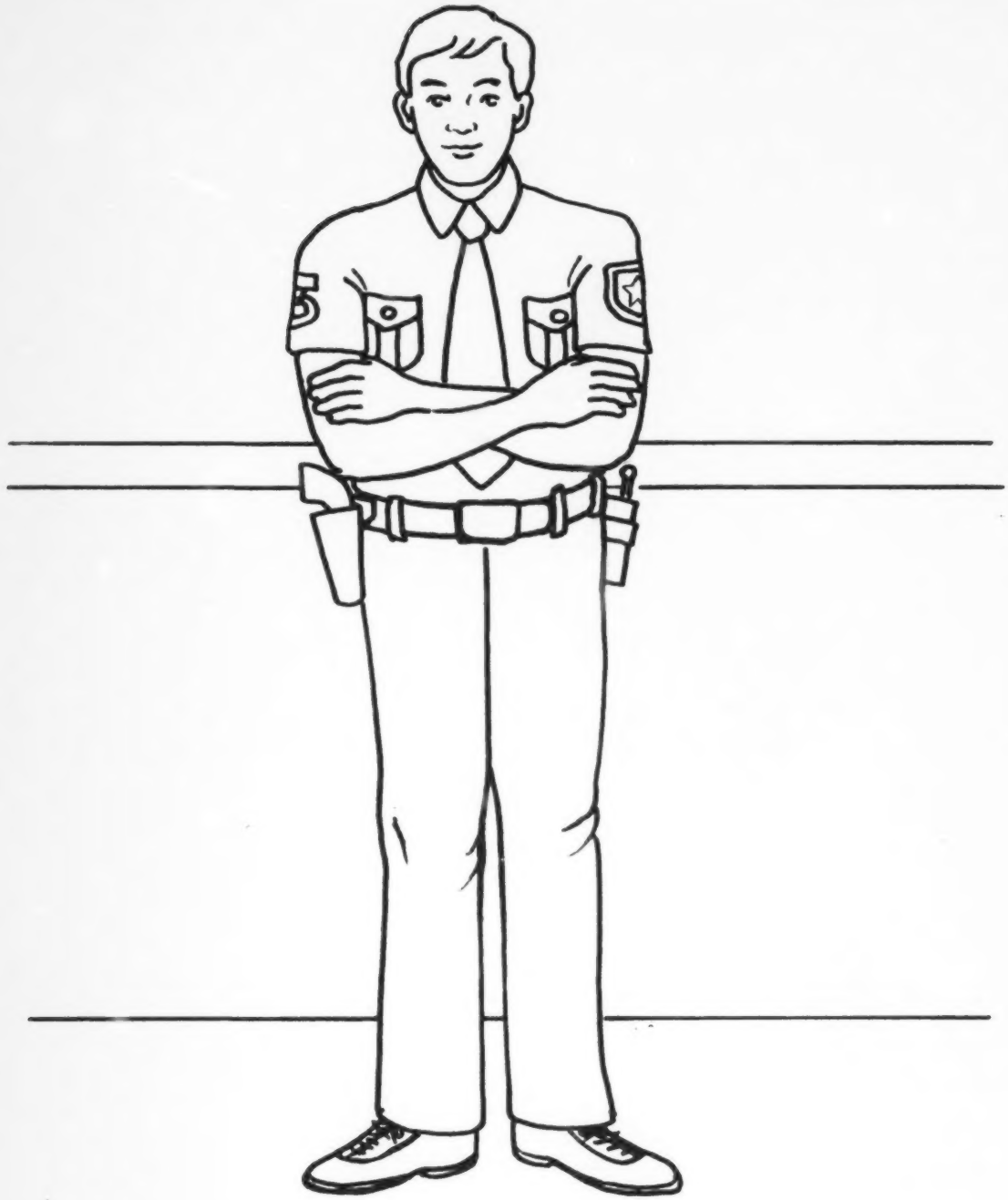
_____

_____

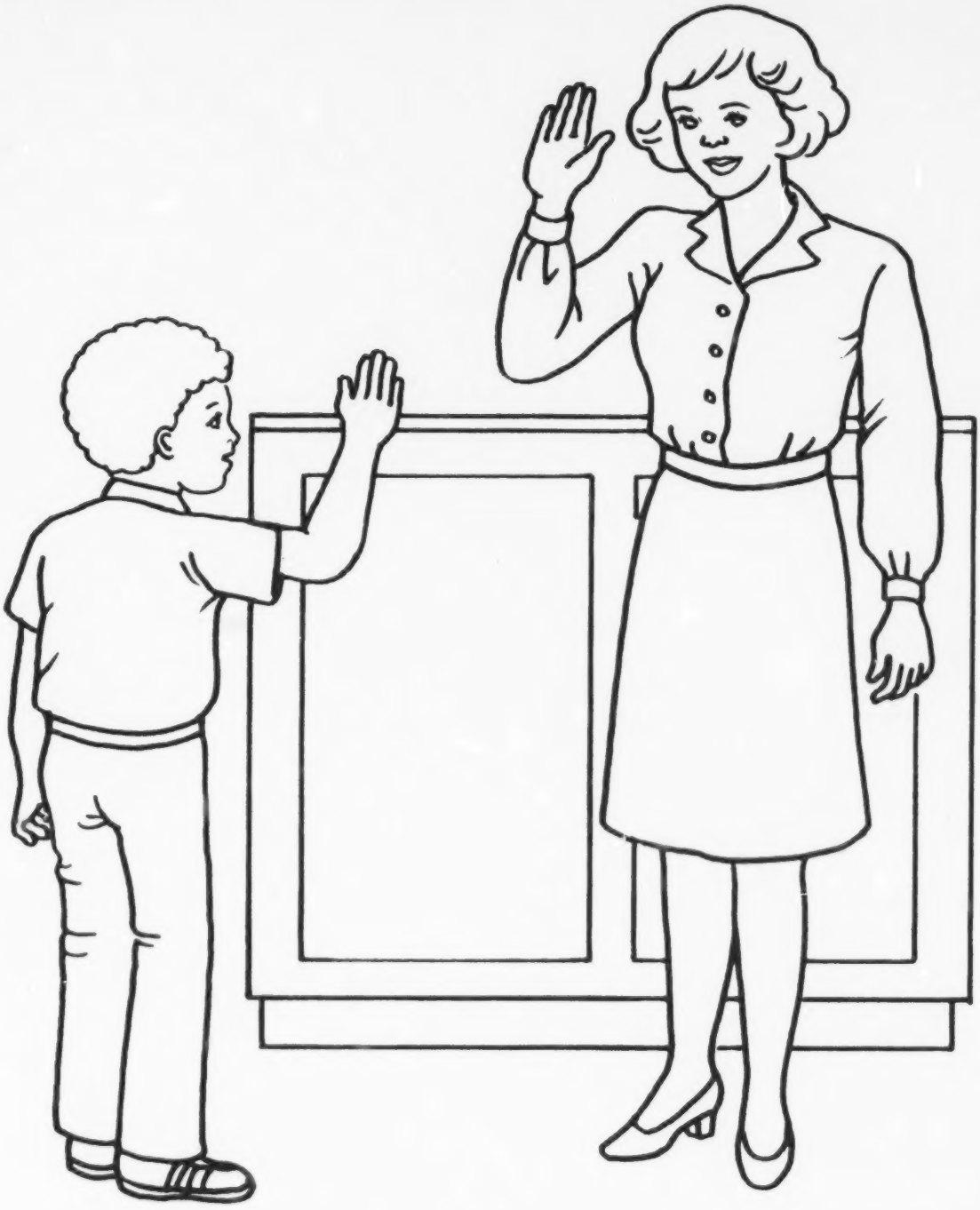
There will also be other people in court who have jobs to do. This book will tell about them.

The **Judge** is the person who sits in the front of the courtroom. Sometimes the judge wears a black robe. The judge is the boss in the courtroom and listens to what the witnesses say. The judge may ask you or other witnesses questions. The judge always wants to hear the truth. If there is no jury, the judge decides what happens.

Sometimes the **Jury** decides what happens. The jury is a group of 12 people. Their job is to listen carefully to everything that the witnesses, the lawyers and the judge have to say.



The **Bailiff** is a deputy sheriff. The bailiff's job is to keep the courtroom a safe place. The bailiff is there to protect the judge and everyone else in the courtroom. Sometimes the bailiff brings witnesses into the courtroom.

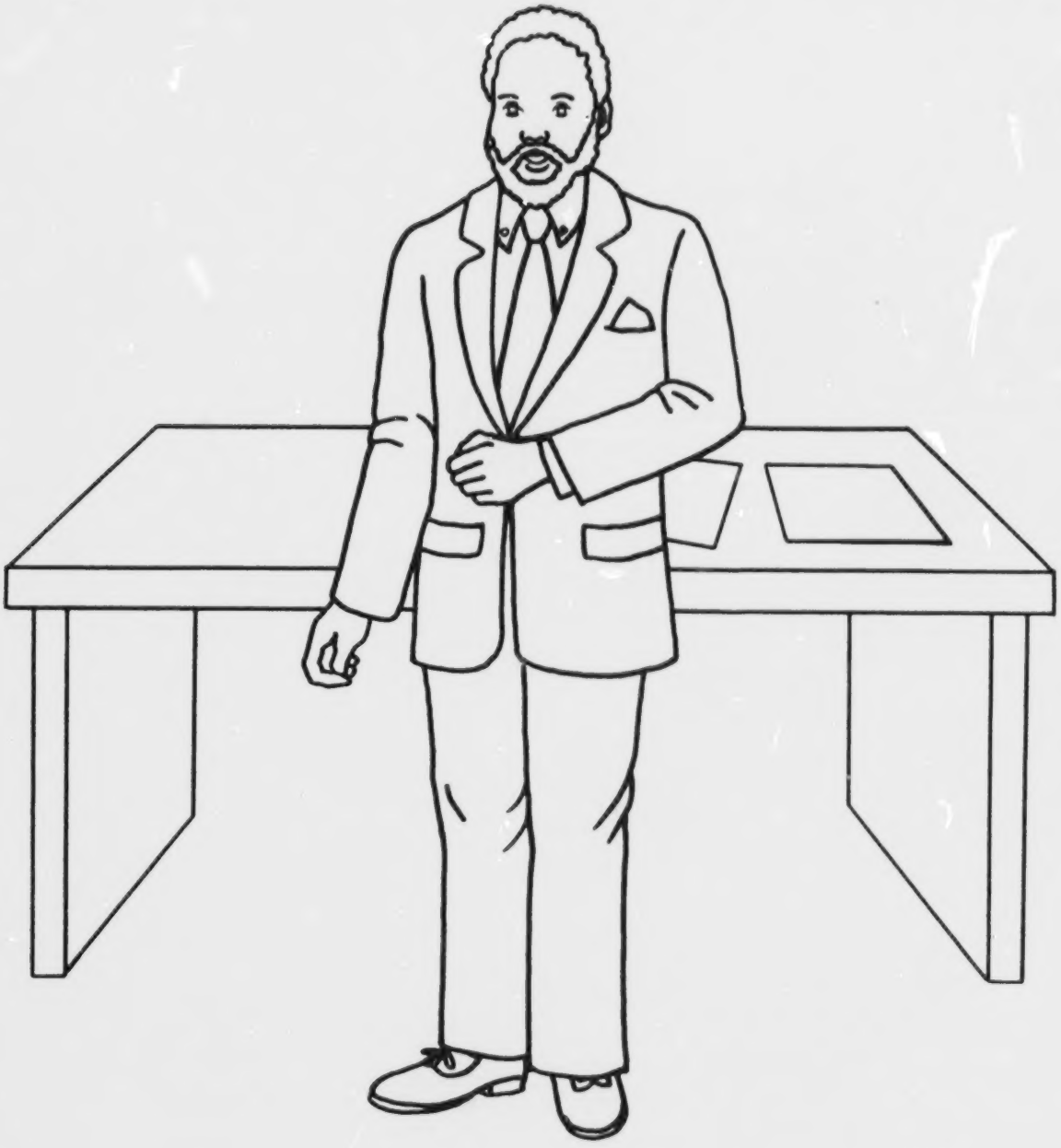


The **Court Clerk** helps the judge in court. The court clerk writes or types notes for the judge. Either the court clerk or judge will ask you to raise your right hand and promise to tell the truth.

The **Commonwealth's Attorney** is the lawyer who helps you tell the judge what happened. Sometimes the Commonwealth's Attorney is called a **Prosecutor**. This person will ask questions about you, like your name and how old you are. The Commonwealth's Attorney will ask you questions about what you saw or heard or felt.

Listen to the questions. If you don't understand the question, ask the Commonwealth's Attorney to ask it in a different way.

The **Defendant** is the person who is accused of doing something wrong. You may know the defendant. The defendant will be in the courtroom while the witnesses answer questions.



The **Defense Attorney** is the lawyer for the defendant. The defense attorney will ask you and the other witnesses questions about what you saw or know.

If you don't understand a question, ask the defense attorney to explain it. Remember to answer all questions by telling the truth.

The **Police Officer** is the person who asked you questions and investigated what happened. The police officer who talked to you may be in court. The police officer's job in court is to help tell what happened.

There may be a **Court Reporter** in the courtroom. The court reporter's job is to type or write everything the witnesses, the lawyers, and the judge say. Everyone must speak in a loud, clear voice. The court reporter may use a machine that looks like a small typewriter on legs.

At the end, the judge or the jury decides what happened. Sometimes this is very difficult. If you don't understand what the judge or jury decided, or if you have any questions you can ask the Commonwealth's Attorney, or the person who helped you in court.

You have done a very important job in court.

Rules for Witnesses

There are rules in court. Some are:

- Tell the truth.
- If you can't remember something or don't understand what someone says, say so.
- Don't guess if you don't know the answer to a question. Say you don't know.
- If you don't agree with what someone asks you, say you don't agree.
- If you are not sure about the answer to a question, only tell the parts that you know.
- Tell the judge if something is bothering you, or if you have a question when you are in court.

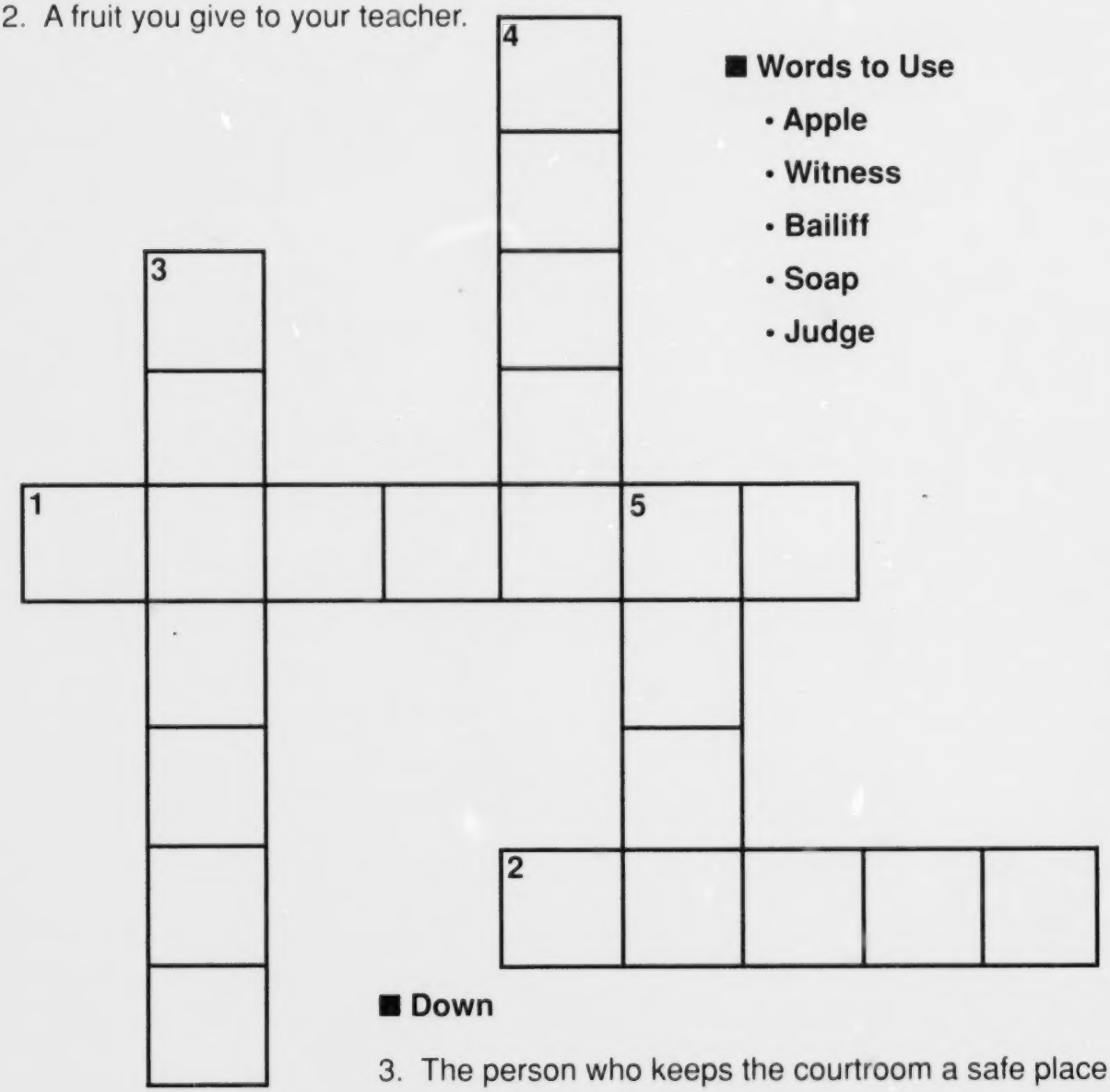
Most people have questions about going to court.
What questions do you have?

After you see the courtroom, draw a picture of it.

Crossword Puzzle

■ **Across**

1. A person who answers questions in court.
2. A fruit you give to your teacher.



■ **Words to Use**

- **Apple**
- **Witness**
- **Bailiff**
- **Soap**
- **Judge**

■ **Down**

3. The person who keeps the courtroom a safe place.
4. The boss in the courtroom who listens to what the witnesses say.
5. Something you use to wash your hands.

Word Search

Find and circle the words listed below. Words may be found across, down, or diagonally.

COURT	PLAY	SUN	HAPPY
BOOK	LAWYER	POLICE	COLOR
ZOO	SCHOOL	TABLE	JUDGE

L Z H A P P Y
O A O B V U L
P S M O S D J
E G C O U R T
S A I K N M D
C O L O R P G
H T Z P E G J
O I X L V B U
O D B A F N D
L A W Y E R G
T P O L I C E

Match Game

Match the people in Column A to their jobs in Column B.

Column A	Column B
Witness	The boss in the courtroom who listens to what the witnesses say.
Courtroom	The person accused of doing something wrong.
Judge	A person who answers questions in court.
Commonwealth's Attorney	The person who asked you questions and investigated what happened.
Defendant	The person who keeps the courtroom a safe place.
Bailiff	A room where witnesses go to tell what they know.
Police Officer	The lawyer who helps you tell the judge what happened.

Dot-To-Dot

Connect the dots.

Answers

■ Crossword Puzzle

			J			
			U			
	B		D			
	A		G			
W	I	T	N	E	S	S
	L				O	
	I				A	
	F		A	P	P	L	E
	F					

■ Match Game

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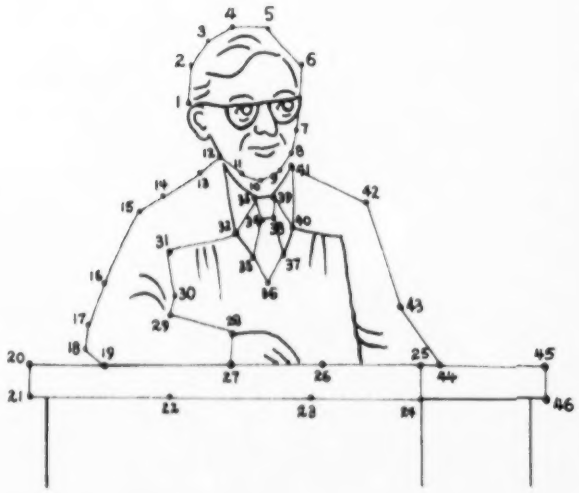
■ Word Search

L	Z	H	A	P	P	Y
O	A	O	B	V	U	L
P	S	M	O	S	D	J
E	G	C	O	U	R	T
S	A	I	K	N	M	D
C	O	L	O	R	P	G
H	T	Z	P	E	G	J
O	I	X	L	V	B	U
O	D	B	A	F	N	D
L	A	W	Y	E	R	G
T	P	O	L	I	C	E

■ DOT-TO-DOT



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Additional copies of this activity book can be requested from:

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805 East Broad Street, 10th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-4000

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The Child As A Witness

How You Can Help

Being a witness is not a common experience for most adults, let alone for children. Many people get nervous as they think about going to court. Adults and children have different concerns. You may worry about whether the child can describe things clearly. The child may be worried about having to go to the bathroom while testifying! As a parent or support person you can help in the following ways:

- Make sure the child has seen the courtroom and is familiar with everyone who will be there. Familiarity reduces fear and increases comfort and confidence.
- You will probably have to wait at court, so plan ahead. Bring a few favorite games, books or toys, and a book or activity for yourself.
- Tell the child that it is okay to be nervous, but reassure the child that he/she will do "just fine" as a witness.
- Don't try to rehearse or coach the child's testimony.
- If the child has questions that you cannot answer, ask the Commonwealth's Attorney or victim/witness staff to answer them.

You may have questions too.

Don't ever be afraid to ask questions or ask for help.

This activity book was given to you by:

"Going to Court" was developed and produced by the Victims Services Section,
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